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as a reminder that this solid ice river was really in a state of constant change and movement. Bower laughed with all his customary gaiety of manner. "That came at a dramatic moment," he said. "Too bad it could not let you pass without giving you a quake!"

"I am not a bit afraid."

"Ah, but I can read your thoughts. There is a bond of sympathy between us."

"Hemp is a nonconductor."

"You are wilfully misunderstanding me," he retorted.

"No. I honestly believed you felt the rope quiver a little."

"Alas! it is the atmosphere. My compliments fall on idle ears."

Barth interrupted this play of harmless chaff by jerking some remark over his shoulder. "Looks like a guxe," he said gruffly.

"Nonsense!" said Bower. "A bank of mist. The sun will soon melt it."

"It's a guxe, right enough," chimed in Karl, who had recovered his power of speech.

"Well, then, push on. The sooner we are in the hut the better."

"Please, what is a guxe?" asked Helen, when the men had nothing more to say.

"A word I should have wished to add later to your Alpine phrase book. It means a storm, a blizzard."

"Should we not return at once in such an event as that?"

"What! Who said just now she was not afraid?"

"But a storm in such a place!"

"These fellows smell a storm in every little cloud from the southwest. We may have some wind and a light snowfall, and that will be an experience for you. Surely you can trust me not to run any real risk?"

"Oh, yes, I do, indeed. But I have read of people being caught in these storms and suffering terribly."

"Not on the Forno, I assure you. I don't wish to minimize the perils of your first ascent; but it is only fair to say that this is an exhibition glacier. If it was nearer town, you would find an orchestra in each amphitheater up there, with sideshows in every couloir. Jesting apart, you are absolutely safe with Barth and me, not to mention the irrepressible gentleman who carries our provisions."

Helen was fully alive to the fact that a woman who joins a mountaineering party should not impose her personal doubts on men who are willing to go. She doubted her ice ax bravely and cried, "Excelsior!"

In the next instant she regretted her choice of expression. The moral of Longfellow's poem might be admirable; but the fate of its hero was unpleasantly topical. Again Bower laughed. "Ah!" he said. "Will you deny now that I am a first rate receiver of wireless messages?"

SHE had no breath left for a quip. Barth was hurrying, and the thin air was beginning to have its effect. When an unusually smooth stretch of ice permitted her to take her eyes from the track for a moment, she looked back to learn the cause of such haste. To her complete astonishment, the Maloggia pass and the hills beyond it were dissolved in a thick mist. A monstrous cloud was sweeping up the Orlegna valley. As yet, it was making for the Mureto Pass rather than the actual ravine of the Forno; but a few wraiths of vapor were sailing high overhead, and it needed no weatherwise native to predict that ere long the glacier itself would be covered by that white pall. She glanced at Bower.

He smiled cheerfully. "It is nothing," he murmured.

"I really don't care," she said. "One does not shirk an adventure merely because it is disagreeable. The pity is that all this lovely sunshine must vanish."

"It will reappear. You will be charmed with the novelty in an hour or less."

"Is it far to the hut?"

## The Tattooed Arm

Continued from page 6

the Gospel text, the beginnin' of it, 'And though after my skin worms destroy this body, Under the picture o' Fanny there was a frame like this, but made o' little flames, and in the frame were half o' Fanny's words, 'A thousand blessin's.'"

"A thousand blessin's," nurse! And they're all gone—all gone with the lost arm! And here, inked and branded forever in my right arm, is the single curse, the loss of her! It's all come because o' the loss o' the ring. That arm with her face and name and ring on it was the joy o' the long years to me. Often I held it up to the sun in the heavens, then I'd dip it into the sea and sometimes bury it deep in the cool shore sands, or let the moonshine come and kiss her face on it, and look at it in secret and when I said my prayers. The ring never came off my finger—never! And now where's the ring and the love o' Fanny that was bound up in it by the deep spells? All gone, crushed with my arm under the wheels o' the engine! It had been fair my life had gone out too, for all the use it be to me now."

"But," said the nurse, "merely losing your arm does not mean you've lost your Fanny."

"It do! It do!" exclaimed Lanswick passionately. "Was it not so fixed in the weal and the woe o' the blessin' and the curse? And now I feel it's true that Fanny and her folk have gone from the moorland; for at Vancouver I heard a North Countryman tell of it; or maybe she's lying deep under the peat near the little church. For that I could not read nor write, we had no letters betwixt us; but there was no need o' that, not with the bond we had. But o' late I've been havin' sick dreams, and one o'

"Hardly twenty minutes at our present pace."

A growl from Barth stopped their brief talk. Another huge crevasse yawned in front. There was an ice bridge, with snow, like others they had crossed; but this was a slender structure, and the leader stabbed it viciously with the butt of his ax before he ventured on it. The others kept the rope taut, and he crossed safely. They followed. As Helen gained the farther side she heard Bower's chuckle:

"Another thrill!"

"I am growing quite used to them," she said. "Well, it may help somewhat if I tell you that the temporary departure of the sun will cause this particular bridge to be ten times as strong when we return."

ATTENTION!" cried Barth, taking a sharp turn to the left. The meaning of his warning was soon apparent. They had to descend a few feet of rough ice, and Helen found, to her great relief it must be confessed, that they were approaching the lateral moraine. Already the sky was overcast. The glacier had taken to itself a cold grayness that was disconcerting. The heavy mist fell on them with inconceivable rapidity. Shining peaks and towering precipices of naked rock were swept out of sight each instant. The weather had changed with magic speed. The mist advanced with the rush of an express train, and a strong wind sprang up as though it was bent on overwhelming them.

Somehow—anyhow—Helen scrambled on. She was obliged to keep eyes and mind intent on each step. Her chief object was to imitate Barth, to poise, and jump, and clamber with feet and hands exactly as he did. At this stage the rope was obviously a hindrance; but none of the men suggested its removal, and Helen had enough to occupy her wits without troubling them with a question. Even in the stress of her own breathless exertions she had room in her mind for a wondering pity for the heavily laden Karl. She marveled that anyone, be he strong as Samson, could carry such a load and not fall under it. Yet he was lumbering along behind Bower with a clumsy agility that was almost supernatural, to her thinking. She was still unconscious of the fact that most of her own struggles were due more to rarefied air than to the real difficulties of the route.

AT last, when she really thought she must cry out for a rest, when a steeper climb than any hitherto encountered had bereft her almost of the power to take another upward spring to the ledge of some enormous boulder, when her knees and ankles were sore and bruised, and the skin of her fingers was beginning to fray under her stout gloves, she found herself standing on a comparatively level space formed of broken stones. A rough wall, surmounted by a flat pitched roof, stared at her out of the mist. In the center of the wall a small, square, shuttered window suggested a habitation. Her head swam, and her eyes ached dreadfully; but she knew that this was the hut, and strove desperately to appear self possessed.

"Accept my congratulations, Miss Wynton," said a low voice at her ear. "Not one woman in a thousand would have gone through this last half-hour without a murmur. You are no longer a novice. Allow me to present you with the freedom of the Alps. This is one of the many châteaux at your disposal."

A wild swirl of sleet lashed them venomously. This first whip of the gale seemed to have the spitefulness of disappointed rage.

Helen felt her arm grasped. Bower led her to a doorway cunningly disposed out of the path of the dreaded southwest wind. At that instant all the woman in her recognized that the man was big and strong and self reliant, and that it was good to have him near, shouting reassuring words that were whirled across the rock crowned glacier by the violence of the tempest.

To be continued next Sunday

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